

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 OES-07 NAS-01 IO-13 EUR-12
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SY-05 MCT-01
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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6050
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, UY
SUBJ: NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE VISIT

REF: MONTEVIDEO 0660 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. DOCTORS CHRISTIAN ANFINSEN AND ROBERT PERRY
ACCOMPANIED BY STAFF MEMBER JAY DAVENPORT VISITED URUGUAY
MARCH 9-14 ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES (NAS)
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE. VISITORS MET WITH PRESIDENT AND
MEMBERS OF SUPREME MILITARY TRIBUNAL, AND REPRESENTATIVE
OF FOREIGN MINISTRY AND VISITED IMPRISONED MATHEMATICIAN,
AND FORMER COMMUNIST PARTY FIRST SECRETARY, DR. LUIS MASSERA
AND HIS WIFE. IN ADDITION TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM, GROUP
HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACT WITH MEMBERS OF URUGUAYAN SCIENTIFIC
COMMUNITY, GAVE A LECTURE AND CALLED ON THE MINISTER OF
EDUCATION AND UNIVERSITY RECTOR. AMBASSADOR HOSTED DINNER
FOR VISITORS AND PROMINENT URUGUAYAN SCIENTISTS. VISITORS
WERE IMPRESSED WITH FFFRIENDLINESS AND HOSPITALITY EXTENDED
THEM BY GOU. ALTHOUGH IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO THEIR APPEAL
TO RELEASE MASSERA WAS NEGATIVE THEY REMAIN HOPEFUL.
THEY WERE PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGED BY ASSURANCE FROM MILITARY
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TRIBUNAL PRESIDENT THAT THEIR EFFORTS WOULD NOT HURT
MASSERA'S CASE BUT INSTEAD MIGHT HELP. PRESS TREATMENT
OF VISIT WAS RESTRAINED AND RESPONSIBLE WITH SOLE, NOTABLE
EXCEPTION OF NATIONALISTIC, PRO-GOVERNMENT LA MANANA WHICH
HEADLINED DISTORTED REMARKS OF ANFINSEN THAT GROUP WAS HERE
TO "PRESSURE" GOU AND LATER ATTACKED GROUP FOR NOT BEING
WELL INFORMED ON 1970 TUPAMARO KIDNAP CASE OF CLAUDE FLY

AND FOR NOT PURSUING HUMAN RIGHTS OF SCIENTISTS IN CUBA, EVEN THOUGH SAME STORY ACKNOWLEDGED NAS ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF SOVIET DISSIDENTS. THIS WAS FIRST HUMAN RIGHTS VISIT BY A FOREIGN GROUP TO BE RECEIVED OFFICIALLY BY THE GOU IN SEVERAL YEARS. THIS REOPENING OF THE DOOR WHICH WENT SMOOTHLY IS SIGNIFICANT, EVEN THOUGH IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE OF MASSERA RELEASE NOT ACHIEVED. WE BELIEVE NAS EXPERIENCE AUGURS WELL FOR NEXT, APRIL 3-7 HUMAN RIGHTS VISIT BY AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION. END SUMMARY.

2. ARRIVING MONTEVIDEO EVENING MARCH 9, NAS VISITORS RECEIVED VIP RECEPTION FROM COUNSELOR OF STATE DR. GARCIA CAPURRO, FONMIN PROTOCOL OFFICER AND ARMY COMMAND STAFF OFFICER LT. COL. ESCOBAL WHO ESCORTED THEM THROUGHOUT VISIT. GOU ALSO FURNISHED LIMOUSINE TO GROUP DURING ITS STAY.

3. MARCH 10 PROGRAM OPENED WITH CALL ON CHARGE' AT EMBASSY, FOLLOWED BY WORKING LUNCH WITH GARCIA CAPURRO. IN AFTERNOON ANFINSEN AND PERRY PRESENTED THREE-HOUR SEMINAR TO PACKED HOUSE OF APPROXIMATELY 100 SCIENTISTS AND MEDICAL DOCTORS AT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE. VISITOR'S IMPRESSION AND LATER REPORTS INDICATE THAT SOME URUGUAYAN SCIENTISTS ATTENDED TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECT OF VISIT.

4. MORNING OF MARCH 11, NAS VISITORS MET FOR APPROXIMATELY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ONE HOUR WITH MATHEMATICIAN JOSE LUIS MASSERA AT LA LIBERTAD "RECUPERATION CENTER," IN PRESENCE OF PRISON COMMANDANT AND ESCORT OFFICER ESCOBAL. MASSERA APPEARED TANNED AND IN GOOD HEALTH DESPITE REMAINING LIMP AND USE OF CANE FROM EARLIER BROKEN PELVIS. VISITORS WERE IMPRESSED BY HIS VERY SUBDUED MANNER, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE LATER TOLD THAT MASSERA HAS ALWAYS BEEN QUIET, INTROSPECTIVE TYPE. MASSERA WAS PLEASED TO LEARN OF SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY'S EFFORTS ON HIS BEHALF AND INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT POSITION ABROAD, PREFERABLY IN ITALY, IF HIS RELEASE/EXPULSION COULD BE ARRANGED, DESPITE HIS PESSIMISM THAT IT COULD BE. ONLY CRITICISM OF CONFINEMENT WAS THAT MASSERA HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN TWO ADVANCED MATHEMATICS BOOKS WHICH NAS HAD SENT VIA AMBASSADOR PEREZ CALDAS. PRISON COMMANDANT SAID THIS WAS BECAUSE BOOKS WERE IN ENGLISH AND THEREFORE COULD NOT RECEIVE REQUIRED SECURITY SCREENING. VISITORS URGED HIM TO RECONSIDER THIS ACTION.

5. IN AFTERNOON, NAS GROUP MET FOR ONE HOUR WITH MRS. MASSERA AT PUNTA RIELES PRISON, AGAIN ACCOMPANIED BY PRISON COMMANDANT AND THEIR MILITARY ESCORT. SHE ALSO APPEARED TO BE TANNED AND IN GOOD HEALTH, DISPLAYING A MUCH LIVELIER

SPIRIT THAN HER HUSBAND. HER ONLY COMPLAINT WAS THAT SHE HAD NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO RECEIVE LETTERS FROM HER HUSBAND SINCE LAST NOVEMBER. SINCE MASSERA IS RECEIVING HER LETTERS THIS APPEARS TO BE PERSONAL, ARBITRARY RESTRICTION OF PRISON COMMANDANT, A MILITARY OFFICER NOTED FOR HIS HARD-NOSED ATTITUDE TOWARD TREATMENT OF "SUBVERSIVES." VISITORS CRITICIZED THIS SANCTION. (EMBASSY IS ALSO BRINGING IT TO ATTENTION OF APPROPRIATE MILITARY OFFICIALS.)

6. EVENINGS MARCH 11 AND 12 NAS GROUP MET PRIVATELY AND SEPARATELY AT THEIR HOMES WITH SISTERS OF BOTH MASSERA AND HIS WIFE, WHO VISIT THEM REGULARLY. THEY CONFIRMED SATISFACTORY TREATMENT OF MASSERAS. MASSERA'S SISTER ALLEGED THAT HE HAD BEEN SANCTIONED AFTER VISIT BY BRITISH AMBASSADOR LATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LAST YEAR AND ASKED, THEREFORE, THAT NAS VISITORS NOT REVEAL THEIR MEETING WITH HER LEST THIS HAPPEN AGAIN. (NOTE: DEPARTMENT PLEASE PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY THIS INFORMATION.)

7. MORNING MARCH 13, NAS GROUP WAS RECEIVED AT FOREIGN MINISTRY BY AMBASSADOR AT LARGE MATEO MARQUES-SERE (FORMER AMB. TO OAS). MARQUES SAID THAT, HAVING RECENTLY LIVED IN U.S. FOR SOME TIME, HE COULD UNDERSTAND BASIC AMERICAN HUMANITARIAN CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. HOWEVER, IN FRIENDLY AND

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-07 NAS-01 HA-05 EUR-12 IO-13

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

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REASONABLE MANNER, HE ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN AND DEFEND GOU POSITION.

8. FOLLOWING COURTESY, NON-HUMAN RIGHTS CALL ON MINISTER EDUCATION, NAS GROUP MET WITH SUPREME MILITARY TRIBUNAL PRESIDENT COL. SILVA LEDESMA AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE TRIBUNAL. ALTHOUGH WE HAD BEEN LED TO EXPECT THAT LEDESMA WOULD BE RATHER FORMAL AND RESERVED (IN REACTION TO HAVING RECENTLY BEEN "BURNED" BY GOLDMAN STATEMENT IN GENEVA) VISITORS FOUND HIM SURPRISINGLY FRIENDLY AND FORTHCOMING. THERE WERE IMPRESSED BY LEDESMA'S EXPLANATION OF STATUS OF TRIALS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND INFORMATION HE FURNISHED TO REFUTE CHARGES ABOUT THE SITUATION OF URUGUAYAN PRISONERS. RE MASSERA, LEDESMA PRODUCED LARGE STACK OF EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM AND ALLUDED TO SIGNED CONFESSION BUT DID NOT FURNISH ANY HARD FACTS RELATED TO SPECIFIC CRIMES. VISITORS GAINED IMPRESSION THAT GOU MIGHT POSSIBLY HAVE CASE AGAINST MASSERA FOR "SUBVERSION" BUT THEY COULD NOT CONFIRM ITS EXISTANCE OR WHAT SPECIFICALLY IT MIGHT BE. ANFINSEN OPENED MEETING BY STRESSING THAT NAS DID NOT WISH TO DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT HURT MASSERA'S CASE AND ASKED POINTEDLY IF THEIR VISIT AND OTHER EFFORTS ON HIS BEHALF MIGHT DO THIS. LEDESMA, ASSURED

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THEM THAT THIS WAS NOT THE CASE. TO THE CONTRARY, HE SAID TRIBUNAL WAS WILLING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY FROM SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AS TO MASSERA'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND WORTH AS A SCIENTIST WHICH IT WOULD CONSIDER IN DECIDING WHAT PUNISHMENT HE SHOULD RECEIVE FOR HIS OTHER ACTIVITIES. NAS VISITOR'S WERE ENCOURAGED BY THIS ASSURANCE.

9. PRESS TREATMENT OF VISIT WAS UNUSUALLY RESTRAINED AND FAIRLY RESPONSIBLE. NEWSPAPERS ACCURATELY REPORTED PRESS INTERVIEWS WHICH NAS GROUP GAVE ON ITS ARRIVAL AND PRIOR TO DEPARTURE, EXPLAINING PURPOSE OF THEIR PRIVATE ORGANIZATION'S VISIT AND NATURE OF ITS CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. SOLE NOTABLE EXCEPTION WAS NATIONALISTIC, GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTING LA MANANA WHICH CARRIED INITIAL INTERVIEW UNDER DISTORTED INCORRECT HEADLINE "ANFINSEN ADMITS PURPOSE IS TO PRESSURE GOVERNMENT." LA MANANA REPEATED THIS PERFORMANCE IN ITS COVERAGE OF FINAL INTERVIEW, MIXING OTHERWISE ACCURATE REPORT WITH EDITORIAL ATTACK ON GROUP FOR NOT BEING WELL INFORMED ON 1970 TUPAMARO KIDNAPPING OF CLAUDE FLY AND FOR NOT ACTIVELY PURSUING HUMAN RIGHTS OF SCIENTISTS IN CUBA, EVEN THOUGH STORY ACKNOWLEDGED NAS EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS.

10. COMMENT: NAS VISIT, WHICH WENT SMOOTHLY, IS SIGNIFICANT

IN THAT IT WAS FIRST HUMAN-RIGHTS VISIT TO BE OFFICIALLY RECEIVED BY GOU IN OVER TWO YEARS. ALTHOUGH VISITORS DID NOT ATTAIN RELEASE OF MASSERA, THEY WERE PERMITTED TO SEE HIM (ALBEIT NOT PRIVATELY), WERE SATISFIED AS TO CONDITIONS OF HIS CONFINEMENT, AND THEY RETAIN SOME HOPE THAT THEY MIGHT YET BE ABLE, IN SOME WAY, TO EXPEDITE HIS RELEASE OR AMELIORATE HIS EVENTUAL SENTENCE. GOU WAS REASONABLY ADEPT IN HANDLING VISIT. HOWEVER, DESPITE HIGH-LEVEL INVOLVEMENT OF PRESIDENT, MINITARY CINC'S, DEFENSE MINISTER AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOREIGN MINISTRY OVER PAST SIX MONTHS, GOU STILL DID NOT PREPARE ITSELF TO EXTENT OF ELIMINATING FLAWS SUCH AS WITHHOLDING OF NAS BOOKS FROM MASSERA AND OF HIS LETTERS TO HIS WIFE. WE WERE ENCOURAGED BY LEDESMA'S HANDLING OF VISITORS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF ANTICIPATED COLD SHOULDER AS WELL AS BY PRESS TREATMENT, DESPITE UNFORTUNATE IRRESPONSIBLE REPORTING BY LA MANANA. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE VISIT WAS WORTHWHILE DOOR OPENER WHICH AUGERS WELL FOR APRIL 3-7 ABA VISIT.

11. ACTION REQUESTED: WE DISCUSSED VISIT WITH NAS GROUP PRIOR TO DEPARTURE BUT DID NOT HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THIS REPORT WITH THEM. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT SHOWING IT TO JAY DAVENPORT TO ASSURE THAT WE HAVE ACCURATELY CONVEYED NAS IMPRESSIONS OF VISIT. DEPARTMENT MAY ALSO WISH TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH BUTLER FOR HIS BACKGROUND. PEZZULLO

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Message Attributes

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